



# AIR WAR COLLEGE

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## RESEARCH REPORT

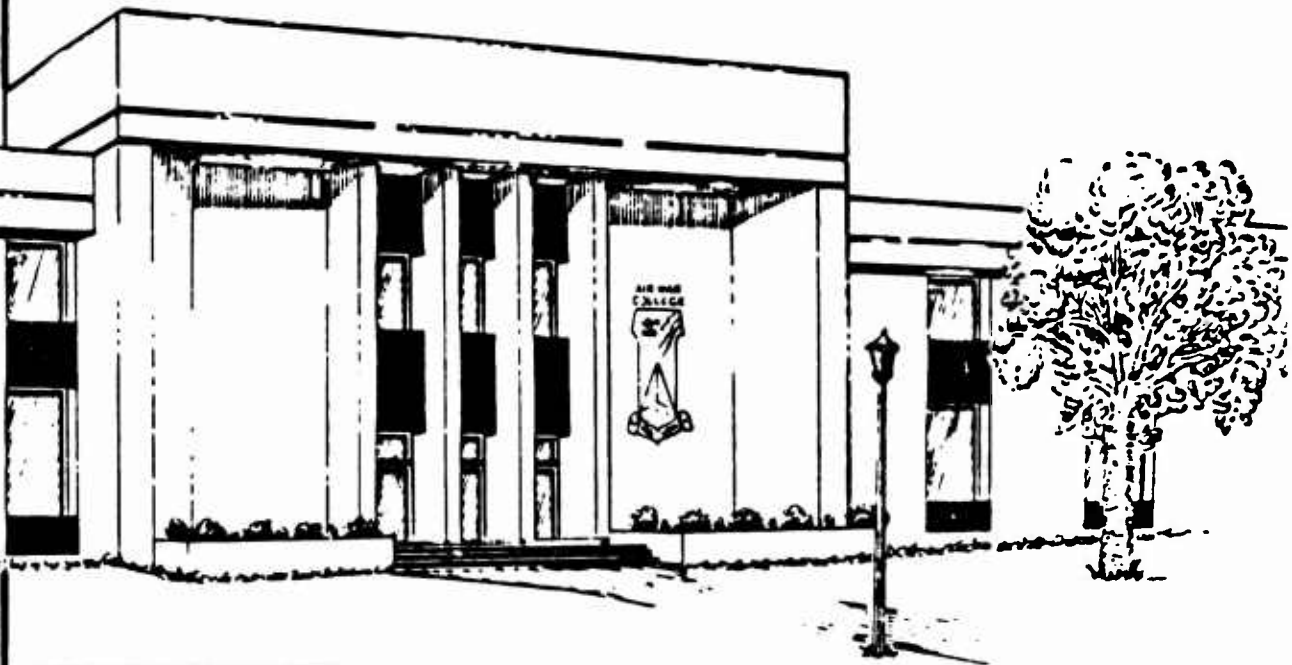
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By COLONEL JOSEPH C. WILSON, JR.

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AIR UNIVERSITY  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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FRATERNIZATION

by  
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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN  
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH  
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Colonel Paul Murphy

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

March 1986



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## AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

**TITLE:**     **Fraternization**

**AUTHOR:**   **Joseph C. Wilson, Jr., Colonel, USAF**

→ **Remarks on the historical context of relationships between leaders and their subordinates, the views of an officer as being both commander and leader, and the impact upon organizational discipline of "improper" as opposed to "proper" relationships. The author then proceeds to a review of current literature on fraternization as a specific issue, outlining others' views as well as his own. He points out that the views of the United States Air Force on officer-enlisted relationships have remained remarkably consistent since the Air Force's inception as a separate service. He then addresses the issue of whether more detailed and specific policy guidance is needed on what constitutes fraternization, concluding that more specificity would only serve to reduce what should be personal relations and personal judgments of the commander to a matter of impersonal routine.**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Joseph C. Wilson, Jr. (B.S., Business Administration, Miami University) maintains a continuing interest in people and the issues that affect them. His primary operational experience in the Air Force has been in the B-52 and Strategic Air Command, his recent experience in that area culminating in 1982 as the Commander, 23rd Bombardment Squadron, Minot AFB, North Dakota. He has also had the experience of several staff assignments at both the Major Air Command (MAJCOM) and Air Staff levels, focusing in the areas of Operations and Plans, performing both requirements planning and programming. He is a holder of the Legion of Merit and a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1986.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

If a general indulges his troops but is unable to employ them; if he loves them but cannot enforce his commands; if the troops are disorderly and he is unable to control them, they may be compared to spoiled children, and are useless.

Sun Tzu (14:129)

In 1982, General Bennie L. Davis, Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command, delivered a presentation at the United States Air Force Academy (24). His subject was officership, and what he saw as an increasing threat to that concept, that being a relaxation of traditional military values and specifically, failure of officers to maintain proper relationships between themselves and their subordinates, most notably the enlisted corps within the United States Air Force. His focus was on

... a single issue which, if left unchecked, can destroy the very core of our military structure -- the issue of fraternization -- social contact between officers and enlisted personnel which results in undue familiarity (24:2).

...Undue familiarity undermines respect, tends to breed contempt and can be one of the most destructive forces in leadership -- one that can sap the effectiveness of a unit. Fraternization, perceived or real, can generate resentment and discontent, and undermine the performance of the Air Force mission (24:8).

Fraternization is a view of personal relationships that has received renewed emphasis within the Air Force. It involves relationships between officers and enlisted personnel, officer-to-officer relationships, and those among enlisted personnel of varying ranks that are deemed to be prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the separate military services.

Discipline and esprit-de-corps are two elements key to the success of any organization. Relationships between the people within an organization that have the effect of undermining discipline, or calling into question the authority or credibility of its leaders have a deleterious effect upon the organization's effectiveness. That fraternization has the potential to decrease individual and organizational effectiveness is not totally accepted, or so it appears. The difference in views seems to depend, to at least some extent, on the definition used and the position within the organization that one occupies, i.e., the old adage "Where you stand depends upon where you sit." An understanding of the issue of fraternization and its potential consequences takes on increasing importance as we look to the future of the ever-increasing presence and expanding roles women play in our institutions.

This paper will employ a review of representative and pertinent



literature as the means of research, to examine the following construct:  
Leader-subordinate relationships, the officer as commander and leader,  
fraternization as a threat to the discipline and effectiveness of an  
organization, and whether detailed, or broad policy guidelines are needed  
within the Air Force.

This research topic was selected in order to help the author to gain a  
better understanding of the issue of fraternization within the context of an  
historical perspective of leader-subordinate relationships. It was found that  
to maintain the broader perspective of the latter, i.e., leader-subordinate  
relationships, requires a certain amount of self-discipline. That is, there is  
the tendency to rapidly, if not immediately, devolve to a discussion of the  
"natural" relationships between men and women, and from there to  
discussion of the relevancy of current policy on fraternization for members  
of the Air Force, a discussion that can quickly become more emotional and  
less objective. Not that this is not important. In fact, it may well be that  
therein lies the reason that the subject of fraternization has received  
renewed emphasis. There are an increasing number of women in today's  
institutions and many of them are taking on increasingly important roles,  
advancing in responsibility and rank. However, focusing too quickly inhibits

one from addressing the larger issue of proper relationships between leaders and subordinates, of which the male-female relationship is only a part, and that is the foundation of the historical view of fraternization which this research intends to address.

## CHAPTER II

### LEADER-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIPS

In his intercourse with subordinates he should ever maintain the attitude of the Commander, but that need by no means prevent him from the amenities of cordiality or the cultivation of good cheer within proper limits.

John Paul Jones (12:117)

That the officer has long considered, and typically striven to maintain a proper balance in his relations with the people under his command is well known, its roots lying deep in military history. On the subject of relationships between the commander and his crew, both the officers and those under them, the latter which he terms "the foundation of all," John Paul Jones writes:

This is the most delicate of all the Commanding Officer's obligations. No rule can be set for meeting it. It must ever be a question of tact and perception of human nature on the spot and to suit the occasion. If an officer fails in this, he cannot make up for such failure by severity, austerity, or cruelty.....

In one word, every Commander should keep constantly before him the great truth, that to be well obeyed he must be perfectly esteemed....(12:118)

Discipline is also a key ingredient to effective command, a premise that Paul Jones emphasizes in his writings, as many military leaders have done

both before and since his time. From the writings of Sun Tzu, circa 500 B.C.: "Thus, command them with civility and imbue them uniformly with martial ardour and it may be said that victory is certain" (14:123). Napoleon's writings also offer a perspective on discipline: "The first qualities of a soldier are fortitude and discipline; courage but the second," and, "The vigorous rules of military discipline are necessary to guarantee the army from defeat, ... and especially dishonour..." (6:176).

Writing on the assumption of command of the Continental Army, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph B. Mitchell (11) notes from George Washington's memoirs his disenchantment with the militia, due to its disorganization of command and lack of discipline. Officers were frequently elected by their constituency of subordinates and, fearing loss of popularity, lacked the ability and the inclination to instill discipline. Washington viewed an efficient and effective officer corps as necessary to insure leadership and discipline and that it "...meant the difference between victory and defeat; an army without leadership and discipline is doomed" (11:17).

Military leaders have maintained that effective leadership and equally effective command require the officer to consider not only the physical needs but the integrity of the people under his supervision and the positive

contribution of discipline. For the officer is charged with not only the welfare of his subordinates but also the welfare of the state and the society which he serves.

General Clarke (3:3), in response to the question of what the soldier expects from his commander writes that he expects "Honest, just and fair treatment. Men admire a strict officer if he is also just. An officer who tries to be a "good fellow" loses his grip early...." While General Clarke sees the need for the commander to know well the people under his command, including their backgrounds and individual characteristics, he also warns against undue familiarity, pointing out that not only do good soldiers not expect it, normally they will resent it. "It is not necessary to call soldiers by their first names even if the officer sleeps in the same foxhole with them".

The nature of the military profession and what has been termed the "unlimited liability" of the contract the military professional holds with the nation he serves, necessitates simultaneously a special bond between the officer and his subordinates as well as a special detachment between the two. It also serves to differentiate between the "citizen-soldier" and the civilian. A member of the military services will always be the former, never the latter, a distinction which is important. This distinction weighs heavily

on the officer and commander in his dealings with his subordinates. The ability to be fair, just, and consistent while simultaneously maintaining a degree of detachment, especially when disciplinary situations arise, or even more so in times of war, makes heavy demands upon the commander who must remember "...that only a person of liberal mind is entitled to exercise coercion over others in a society of free men" (5:58).

General S.L.A. Marshall, himself having served in the enlisted corps writes extensively on the subject of the officer and his relationships with his subordinates in The Officer as a Leader:

The art of leadership, the art of command, whether the forces be large or small, is the art of dealing with humanity. Only the officer who dedicates his thought and energy to his men can convert into coherent military force their desire to be of service to the country. Such were the fundamental values that Napoleon had in mind when he said that those who would learn the art of war should study the Great Captains. He was not speaking of tactics and strategy. He was pointing to the success of Alexander, Caesar, and Hannibal in molding raw human nature, and to their understanding of the thinking of their men and of how to direct it toward military advantage...(10:147).

The identity of the officer with the gentleman should persist in his relations with men of all degree. In the routine of daily direction and disposition, and even in moments of exhortation, he had best bring courtesy to firmness. The finest officers that one has known are not occasional gentlemen, but in every circumstance -- in commissioned company and, more importantly, in contact with those who have no recourse against arrogance (10:169).

General Marshall, as a student of military history, brings forth the views of past military leaders in addition to his own, that the officer holds a "superior position", and that this position is one that must be preserved for the good of the services. That does not militate against frank, intellectual discourse between the officer and his subordinates, nor does it prohibit comradeship between the two. Neither does it attempt to define an artificial class distinction. It does define a position of special trust which the officer accepts as a responsibility at the time of commissioning. General Marshall maintains that those who have served both as officer and in the enlisted ranks, as he has

...know, if they have observed well and truly during their service in the ranks, that the highest type enlisted man wants his officer to act the part, maintain dignity, and support the ideals that are consonant with the authority vested in him by the Nation. But this same man at the same time expects his officers to concede him his right to a separate position and to respect his privacy (10:136-137).

To return to a point alluded to earlier, that being the distinction between citizen-soldier and civilian, Sam C. Sarkesian, in his essay on the "Moral and Ethical Foundations of Military Professionalism" (13), attempts to reconcile the perceived conflict between perceptions of the two by examining the concept of "officership." Sarkesian sees the concept of officership as being

one of the foundations of the moral and ethical patterns of the American military profession, and as an important concept because it distinguishes officers from other members of the military ranks. Officership is based on the idea that "Officers...hold a special trust and confidence to perform their duties with a dignity that brings honor to the state," that concept being spelled out in the oath of office (13:6).

Samuel P. Huntington in The Soldier and the State, writes on the concept of officership as a profession (7:7-18), maintaining that the trait that distinguishes the professional military officer from the civilian and even from other officers who serve as specialists within the military services, is the "...direction, operation, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence..."(7:11) and whose responsibility is that of military security for the society it serves, to the "...exclusion of all other ends" (7:15). In his view, the professional military officer is an individual who must be continuously expanding his knowledge not only in his particular discipline, but in the related disciplines of economics, history, politics, sociology and psychology while striving to improve his mastery of "...an extraordinarily complex intellectual skill requiring comprehensive study and training..." (7:13), all of which is a



continuous process taking a significant part of the military officer's career.

General Marshall addresses the issue of perception in a more direct fashion:

In the United States, we have fallen into the sloppy habit of saying that a soldier, sailor, airman, marine, or coast guardsman is only an American civilian in uniform. The corollary of this quaint notion is that all military organization is best run according to the principles of business management. Both of these ideas are to be disputed....An officer is not only an administrator but a magistrate, and it is this dual role that makes his function so radically different from anything encountered in civil life -- to say nothing of the singleness of purpose by which the Services move forward. Moreover, the military officer deals with the most plastic human material in the society -- men who, in the majority, the moment they step into uniform, are ready to seek his guidance toward a new way of life (10:135).

Sarkesian also maintains that, over time, a view has developed that the military profession has adopted a parochial perspective that interprets morality and ethics within the boundaries of the profession, as opposed to the boundaries of the larger society. In that manner it reconciles the concepts of individuality and the values of society with the military profession. However, that leads to the apparent dilemma of attempting to serve a society whose primary value system may differ from its own. In Sarkesian's words, "One cannot have it both ways," which leads to the continuing dilemma of trying to reconcile the military profession with

democracy and continuing efforts to try to explain the military profession "...in terms of its separateness from society" (3:7).

In the post World War II era, Sarkesian's research suggests that the military profession shifted to more of a managerial orientation, incorporating the methods of American industry and entrepreneurship, which itself was thriving in the civilian sector. With that developed a view that the military had finally adapted its values and lifestyles to equate them with the entrepreneurial society it served. Sarkesian believes neither perspective to be entirely correct, that "Both perspectives provide half-truths" (13:7). He writes:

Some segments of the military can be compared to the managerial and entrepreneurial "mind-set," but to presume that this development is the sole thrust of professionalism is to overlook the fact that men must still be led in operational units. Command decisions are not based solely or even generally on systems analysis or cost effectiveness. An entrepreneurial "mind-set" cannot be instilled and maintained in a professional system whose client is the state and whose performance criteria has little to do with production and profit... (13:8).

Thus, the moral and ethical patterns of the military profession must be linked with society on the one hand and stem from the unique purpose of the profession on the other (13:9).

The issue raised then, might be viewed in the context of "management" versus "leadership," but it is not an either/or proposition, as Sarkesian

points out, nor is it one peculiar to the military profession.

Zaleznik writes that:

Business has contributed its answer to the leadership question by evolving a new breed called the manager...[but]...managerial leadership does not necessarily ensure imagination, creativity, or ethical behavior in guiding the destinies of corporate enterprises (23:67).

Zaleznik's observations point out that while managers generally prefer to work with people, they also avoid close personal relationships because doing so supports their role of seeking compromise, reconciling differences and maintaining a balance of power in the organization. Leaders, on the other hand "...attract strong feelings of identity and difference..." and that such an atmosphere "...intensifies individual motivation and often produces unanticipated outcomes" (23:71).

Bennis and Nanus (2) maintain that there is a crucial difference between the concepts of "managing" and "leading", and that, unfortunately, the difference is recognized all too infrequently. The former focuses on routine, problem-solving, and goal-reaching, while the latter seeks initiative and innovation and concentrates its efforts on problem-finding and goal-searching(2:21). They also agree with Zaleznik on the differences between the two concepts as they affect personal relationships, although

they express it in different terms. Their research supports the idea of "trust", in the capabilities of the organization's people as an element of a leader-oriented organization, the term implying "...accountability, predictability, reliability...Trust is the glue that maintains organizational integrity" (2:43).

Bennis and Nanus' research also shows, however, that industry's leaders are sensitive to the problem of over-familiarity and view it as a potential threat that allows personal feelings to interfere with organizational effectiveness (2:66,67). Tied to the problem is the desire for people to be liked. Their research supports the concept that the effective leader has the "ability to do without constant approval and recognition from others. Particularly in a work situation, the need for constant approval can be harmful and counterproductive" (2:67). Pulich agrees when he says that "Sometimes we forget that the work relationship centers around the job and think that a positive work relationship occurs when the supervisor is liked by his or her employees" (22:14).

C.W. Oman, in Wellington's Army wrote of the concept of trust and the relationship between a leader and his people when he said:

To say that Wellington from the first was trusted alike by his officers and his men, is by no means to say that he was loved

by them. He did everything that could win confidence, but little that could attract affection...."The sight of his long nose among us," wrote one of his veterans, "was worth ten thousand men any day of the week. I will venture to say that there was not a heart in the army which did not beat more lightly when we heard the joyful news of his arrival" (12:85).

Or, as Sir Ian Hamilton put it in his The Soul and Body of an Army:

"Popularity with our men is a mystery....The sure way to lose popularity is to seek it" (12:175).

With these perspectives in mind, let us now turn to a more specific review of the issue of fraternization within the United States Air Force.

## CHAPTER III

### FRATERNIZATION AS A SPECIFIC ISSUE

Whoever serves his country well has no  
need of ancestors.

Voltaire(10:28)

In March of 1946, Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle chaired a board, commissioned by the Secretary of War, to investigate allegations that, during World War II, relationships between the officers and their subordinates, most notably the enlisted men, had not been what American society expected. The center of investigation was a lack of democracy in the Army, allegations as to instances of incompetent leadership, and abuses of privileges on the part of officers. The witnesses that the Board chose were selected "...in such a way as to procure a truly representative cross-section of thinking on the subject of officer-enlisted relationships" (4:7).

The Report notes that "strained relations" between officers and enlisted men was not then a new phenomenon, going back to expressions of such by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War, followed by similar instances in the Civil War, and in World War I, a report to the

Secretary of War called attention to the "...bitterness engendered among enlisted men by special privileges accorded the officer personnel..." (4:8).

The Report also notes that this was a time of national mobilization for war and initiation of the draft, wherein many of its members, especially those forced into service against their will, were not favorably disposed towards military service, or the military Services. The criticisms received by the Board also indicated:

...the problem of officer-enlisted relationships was insignificant among combat troops while at the front. It was in the rear areas and isolated outposts...and on the home front, where most of the abuses of privileges, irregularities, and poor personnel management took place" (4:10).

Nevertheless, the Board concluded that the causes of poor relationships between officers and enlisted men were due to poor leadership on the part of a small proportion of the officer corps, and a system that permitted a wide gap, officially and socially, between the two. Furthermore, that "The present system does not permit full recognition of the dignities of man. More definite protection from the arbitrary acts of superiors is essential" (4:25).

Among the Board's recommendations were the following:

That all military personnel be allowed, when off duty, to pursue normal social patterns comparable to our democratic way of life.

The abolishment of all statutes, regulations, customs, and traditions which discourage or forbid social association of

soldiers of similar likes and tastes, because of military rank.

That necessary steps be taken to eliminate the terms and concepts, "enlisted men" and "officer," that suitable substitutes be employed...and that all military personnel be referred to as "soldiers."

That close contact and association with civilians be encouraged and maintained since a citizen's Army is a result of combined interest, effort, and contribution of both military and public. A mutual exchange of information will enhance the military organization. Length of military service seems to automatically divorce military personnel from civilian outlook. A maximum of military personnel living in civilian communities, rather than on Army posts, will assist in accomplishing this (4:29-30).

On June 26, 1946, the Secretary of War, Robert Patterson, released a statement to the press that represented the views of the War Department and its civilian leadership (21). In responding to the conclusions and recommendations of the Doolittle Board, the Secretary's statement recognized the need to correct some of the Army's practices. The Army had taken steps to improve its selection procedures for officers as well as improving the training of those selected. It undertook an initiative with the Congress that would provide the Army more effective means of eliminating ineffective and undesirable officer personnel.

However, with regard to the recommendations that all military personnel be allowed when off duty to pursue "normal social patterns comparable to our democratic way of life" and that all statutes, regulations, customs, and



traditions "discouraging or forbidding social associations of soldiers because of military rank" be abolished, the Secretary replied that:

The solution to this problem is a matter of common sense. The abolition of all off-duty restraint upon social association of officers and enlisted men might lead to more dangerous abuses than those which this proposal intends to correct (21:2).

The Secretary also directed the following changes to Army Field Manual 20-50, which it should be noted was in effect in 1942, prior to U.S entry into the war. The underlined portion constitutes that portion that was rescinded:

"34. PERSONAL ATTITUDES. - Do not lose your sense of humor or sense of proportion. There is a tendency on the part of a few officers to think too much of the personal benefits which they might derive from their status as an officer. In the interests of good discipline, officers are required to wear distinctive uniforms, to live apart from their men in garrison, and to confine their social contacts to other officers. But Do not make the mistake of thinking of yourself as a superior individual....In your relations with your men in the field never demand any bodily comforts for yourself which are denied to them. Think of yourself only after your men have been cared for. Through unselfish service, earn the respect and loyalty of your men, and they will cheerfully and willingly "take care of the old man" (21:3).

Secretary Patterson was not finished with the subject, however. He closed his statement with a point of view that put the issue back into perspective. And the statement may be interpreted as a fairly strong and straightforward one, especially considering the times -- the country was still

demobilizing from the most devastating war in its history.

As a final word on this whole problem I cannot refrain from pointing out that in seeking improvement in detail, we must not lose sight of the fundamentals.

The ultimate objective of armies is to be ready in national crisis, to win victory on the battlefield. There can be no democracy in the platoon advancing under fire to take a tactical objective. Only discipline of the highest order can then win the fight and at the least cost in lives....The situation is one where the authority of the leader must be unchallenged. Men will fight well only with a leader who does not hesitate to accept the tremendous responsibility involved and to exercise authority equal to that responsibility.

The other fundamental of the problem is to fit this inescapable requirement into the organization and into the control and command practices of the Army in such a way as to avoid *unnecessary* violence to our national concepts of freedom and democracy (21:3) (emphasis added).

Colonel Flatten, in one of the most oft cited articles on fraternization, begins with a brief history on the issue. He cites first a "representative example" of early military writings, a 1921 instruction on military discipline by Major General David C. Shanks which states in part that "...undue familiarity between officers and enlisted men is forbidden....This requirement is not founded upon any difference in culture or mental attainments. It is founded solely upon the demands of discipline" (19:109). The author then reviews recent history concerning the specific issue, citing the 1942 version of The Officer's Guide, the recommendations of the Doolittle

Board of 1946, and the 1976 version of The Air Force Officer's Guide, and observes that basically, Air Force customs stem from those of the Army after creation of the Air Force as a separate service, and that "Insofar as the custom against fraternization is concerned the... [Doolittle Board's] ... recommendations were allowed to die" (19:110). His review of the literature points to a difficulty in defining exactly what constitutes fraternization, but also points to its focus having been on relationships between officers and enlisted personnel within the Armed Forces. However, his view of the ultimate outcome of the Doolittle Board's recommendations would seem to be a rather generous interpretation, given Secretary Patterson's press release cited earlier.

A less generous interpretation might proceed with the following tack: If the recommendations were allowed to languish and die, that would imply inattention or indifference on the part of the Army. But, it doesn't appear the Board's recommendations were allowed to languish. Rather, given Secretary Patterson's statement, it appears more likely that the Doolittle Board's recommendations in the area of fraternization were specifically addressed and rejected. Rejection, then, implies lack of agreement by the Army with the perceptions of changing societal values, or lack of agreement

within the American society at large that the Army should necessarily reflect changing societal values. It seems that the latter is more probable, with respect to this particular issue. Recall that one of the guiding premises of the Doolittle Board was to call witnesses in such a manner as to "...provide a cross-section of thinking..." on the subject. They were not necessarily seeking the dominant views, either within or without the nation's military services. The distinction is subtle, but important to any consideration of the Doolittle Board's recommendations.

Colonel Flatten's review of cases prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice indicates that the courts, at least up until recently, have supported the custom that "...officers may not associate with enlisted personnel on a basis of military equality,...[or]...in a manner which adversely affects or prejudices good order or military discipline" (19:112).

A recent article in the Army Times (26) highlights the differences that can exist over what constitutes fraternization. Some hold that an improper relationship requires that one party hold "professional authority over the other," and that the relationship must "demonstrably affect troop morale and discipline" (26:1). Other, more strict interpretations, hold that any social relationship between officers and the enlisted ranks can be considered

improper if it has the potential to hurt troop morale, even it hasn't been demonstrated. There also exists a divergence of views on the range of disciplinary options that should be available, the former holding that counseling is all that should be normally required, the latter holding firmly that such determinations are to be made by the individual's commander within the range of options available to him.

In a more recent case (25), the Air Force has asked the Court of Military Appeals to review a lower court's dismissal of fraternization charges against an Air Force officer who was charged with having sexual relations with three enlisted women. While the Review Court upheld charges of adultery and conduct unbecoming an officer, presumably because of one of the enlisted women being married to an Air Force non-commissioned officer (NCO), the fraternization charges were dismissed in a 4-3 ruling stating that "We cannot say that seeing each other socially or dating is criminal conduct" (25:13). It described the officer's case as "...voluntary, private, non-deviate sexual activity between of-age officer and enlisted members who were not associated with one another in any way on duty" (25:13).

The government's position held that the standards for an officer need be held higher than those of enlisted members, that the officer's actions

were"...morally unbecoming, and unworthy,... dishonorable and disagreeable... to the military profession..." and that by picking up the enlisted women at the NCO Club, he "...suffered a loss of respect from those who knew of his behavior" (25:13).

It may well be that some military courts are beginning to see, as Colonel Flatten does, that the ban on fraternization is no longer viable, due to their views of changing societal values, the ever-increasing emphasis on individual rights and concomitant diminishing of institutional authority, and the increasing role that women are and will continue to play in the Armed Forces.\* Colonel Flatten sees the people entering the military services as more and more equalitarian and that they will therefore "...resist customs which imply that officers are better than airmen" (19:112). As for the custom of the Service, he writes:

The ban against fraternization is at best a custom which is losing its vitality. At worst it is a lingering but unenforceable relic of a bygone era. Reluctantly, one must conclude that the latter is closer to the truth than the former (19:113).

That hasn't proved to be true, however, for in 1984 the Manual for

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\* For a discussion of the increasing role of women at top management levels within American industry, and the impact upon traditional values and organizational discipline, see Eliza Collins' "Managers and Lovers" in the Harvard Business Review (18).

Courts-Martial, United States, the embodiment of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, an order by the President, authorized by the Constitution and the Congress, and which has the full force and effect of law, was amended to provide specifically for fraternization as a military offense (9:IV-126, 127). Under its provisions, commissioned or warrant officers may not fraternize with enlisted members on terms of military equality or under circumstances that prejudice the good order and discipline of the armed forces, or in a manner which brings discredit upon the armed forces. The Manual for Courts-Martial explains the context intended by adding the following:

The gist of this offense is a violation of the custom of the armed forces against fraternization. Not all contact or association between officers and enlisted persons is an offense. Whether the contact or association in question is an offense depends on the surrounding circumstances. Factors to be considered include whether the conduct has compromised the chain of command, resulted in the appearance of partiality, or otherwise undermined good order, discipline, authority, or morale. The acts and circumstances must be such as to lead a reasonable person experienced in the problems of military leadership to conclude that the good order and discipline of the armed forces has been prejudiced by their tendency to compromise the respect of enlisted persons for the professionalism, integrity, and obligations of an officer (9:IV-127).

The Manual for Courts-Martial is consistent in its provisions for professional relationships with those provided for in the Air Force. The

provisions of Air Force Regulation 30-1, Air Force Standards, applicable to the subject at hand, are highlighted in the following:

- a. Professional relationships are essential to the effective operation of the Air Force. In all supervisory situations there must be a true professional relationship supportive of the mission and operational effectiveness of the Air Force. There is a long standing and well recognized custom in the military service that officers shall not fraternize or associate with enlisted members under circumstances that prejudice the good order and discipline of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- b. In the broader sense of superior-subordinate relationships there is a balance that recognizes the appropriateness of relationships. Social contact contributing to unit cohesiveness and effectiveness is encouraged. However, officers and NCOs must make sure their personal relationships with members, for whom they exercise a supervisory responsibility or whose duties or assignments they are in a position to influence, do not give the appearance of favoritism, preferential treatment, or impropriety. Excessive socialization and undue familiarity, real or perceived, degrades leadership and interferes with command authority and mission effectiveness. It is very important that the conduct of every commander and supervisor, both on and off duty, reflects the appropriate professional relationship vital to mission accomplishment....
- c. Air Force members of different grades are expected to maintain a professional relationship governed by the essential elements of mutual respect, dignity, and military courtesy. Every officer, NCO, and airman must demonstrate the appropriate military bearing and conduct both on and off duty. Social and personal relationships between Air Force members are normally matters of individual judgement. They become matters of official concern when such relationships adversely affect duty performance, discipline, and morale...(27:19-20).

On military ethics, Air Force Regulation 30-1 states: "...Your code of ethics



must be such that your behavior and motives do not create even the appearance of impropriety" (27:21).

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

Discipline is instant and willing obedience to all orders, and in the absence of orders, to what you believe the order would have been.

Colonel Applin of the British  
General Staff (28:12)

Fraternization is a term that has caused controversy within the armed forces, the Air Force being no exception; its focus has traditionally remained upon the narrower aspect of officer-enlisted relationships. Air Force views on these relationships have remained remarkably consistent since the Air Force's inception as a separate service in 1947. Consider the following overlay of the most recent version of the Air Force Officer's Guide with the Air Officer's Guide of 1948. That indicated in brackets marks the differences in the most recent version.

The officer strives to develop his [or her] organization to its maximum efficiency, while providing for his [or her] men [people] an effective leadership, an impartial justice, a wise and fair attitude in every way. Those things which militate against this necessary result must be avoided. It is a psychological fact that undue familiarity breeds contempt. Officers and soldiers [airmen] have not generally associated together in mutual social activities. No officer could violate this ancient custom with one or two men [people] of his command and convince the

others of his unswerving impartiality (1:236, 8:37).

The officer must be objective, impartial and just in his contacts and decisions. Favoritism or the suspicion of favoritism will wreck an organization (1:269, 8:151).

At the same time, Air Force policy recognizes that the issue of proper relationships applies to all ranks within the service, that is, that there are proper and improper relationships that must be addressed among its officers and among its enlisted members, as well as between the two.

The foundations of the Air Force's views are steeped in military history and tradition, that the officer must maintain balance in his approach to his subordinates in order to maintain objectivity, and that these are key elements in discharging his responsibilities as an administrator, magistrate, leader and commander. They underwrite his privilege to serve.

Not all fraternization is improper or illegal, however, and Air Force policy recognizes this as well. There is a certain amount of camaraderie that contributes to unit cohesion, morale and organizational effectiveness. It is when it approaches the point of adversely affecting morale, or becomes disruptive to the organization that it becomes improper, and illegal when it becomes prejudicial to the good order and discipline of the organization, or brings discredit upon the Service.

Whether the issue is still a proper one for consideration, or should be

seen as a "relic of a bygone era" (19:113), is a question that seeks to interpret a view of changing societal values, and impose those upon the military as a unique mandate for change. Increasing education, more broadly based educational levels, diminishing stratification of pay, and commonality of types and places of entertainment are seen as indications of diminishing margins of difference in society as a whole and between ranks in the military services in particular (16:12). This author does not hold that point of view, nor does he see the literature on the subject of leadership and leader-subordinate relationships supporting such a point of view.

As we have seen, the issue of "proper relationships" is one of long-standing consideration, from which derives the custom against fraternization, which seeks to avoid "undue familiarity," and is one common to the "Captains" of the military profession as well as the "Captains" of civilian industry. Failure to observe the requirements yields similar results -- conflicts of interest and diminishing organizational discipline and effectiveness. It transcends our own profession. It is common to effective leadership in any organization. However, because the military profession requires "unlimited liability" on the part of its members, organizational and individual discipline are absolutely necessary to insure that we are able to

achieve what we are tasked to do. The requirement for discipline has no counterpart in degree in civilian life. The impact of undue familiarity has been found to have a negative influence in both military and civilian organizations. The impact of undue familiarity upon discipline is more deleterious to a military organization than may be found in civilian life.

Failure to maintain a proper relationship, or associating on the basis of military equality, adversely affects unit discipline and morale and erodes the officer's authority and respect for his position. The latter has more far-reaching implications than only respect for the individual concerned, for it erodes respect for the officer corps as part of the military institution. And in this respect, perceptions are just as important as the facts, because both affect people's attitudes, and therefore, performance. A person has only to believe that favoritism, or the threat of favoritism exists for it in fact to exist in his own mind. Once that point is reached, the officer as an individual has begun to lose his credibility, and therefore his ability to lead and to command. The officer corps has suffered a similar setback in the eyes of those we are charged to lead and command.

Favoritism engenders an inability to render judgements impartially. Captain Crooks, in his essay on women and sea duty, puts it very well when

he says:

...good leaders are concerned with the impressions which their activities make on those working for them and frequently go out of their way to insure they appear even-handed or that their actions are not misconstrued (15:12).

The increasing presence of women in the Air Force may well have complicated perceptions of relationships between its members. This may be especially true when one considers the perceptions of the enlisted members of an organization if an officer dates an enlisted person known to them. In this instance, the enlisted ranks may, first of all, view the officer as "poaching" in their rightful reserves. The effect is an adverse effect upon morale. Or, the officer may be perceived as using his position to gain favor, in which case respect for his position as an officer is greatly diminished. It is not unreasonable to assume a lessening for the respect for the officer corps as a whole, given that such instances should become more frequent. It causes the people to question the officer's ability to judge impartially, regardless of his position relative to the organization of the enlisted member he chooses to date.

To attempt to describe such relationships in terms of being "proper" or "improper" based upon whether or not the individuals concerned are in the same chain of command is to ignore the basic issue. The officer is looked

upon as a leader -- its expected that he be so -- and as such, he cannot compromise, or be perceived as having compromised his ability to act authoritatively, justly and fairly. If he cannot maintain that position in fact and perception, he has become ineffective in a leadership role and, therefore, ineffective as an officer.

One final point remains to be addressed and that is the extent to which the Air Force should provide more specific guidelines on what constitutes fraternization. Colonel Flatten and others (16, 19) have called for more specificity as being necessary to insure equity and the ability of officers to know in advance what is required of them. Others (17,24), including Paul Jones, circa 18th century, hold the view that it is impossible and inappropriate to lay down specific guidelines, that it must be a matter of individual circumstance, as it affects the people and the unit involved. It would seem that the latter is the more desirable approach, and consistent with the charge the Air Force has historically given its officers. The call for more "specifics" springs from an over-emphasis on enlightened management principles, sometimes to the exclusion of leadership training, that is, concentrating on administering the routine, the context of Bennis' and Nanus' discussion of "management" versus "leadership". It seems to this author that

their observations are applicable to this discussion. To attempt to detail the specific instances of what constitutes fraternization would in fact be an attempt to make it a matter of routine, when it should not be such. It should remain a matter of broad policy guidance and interpretation of the circumstances by the officer or commander charged with the performance of his or her people. That is the essence of dealing with people and the essence of leadership and command. Lieutenant Colonel Admire stated it very well when he said "...we should never attempt to deceive ourselves into believing that fraternization standards will ever be absolute or equal or that the solutions are simple ones" (17:66).

Or, to once again quote Secretary Patterson: "The solution to this problem is a matter of common sense" (21:2).



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